

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ROME 14532

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SUBJECT: EVOLUTION OF A NEW SOCIALIST STRATEGY AND DEBATE WITH
THE COMMUNISTS

SUMMARY: SINCE SOCIALIST SECRETARY DEMARTINO CHIDED THE
COMMUNISTS IN MID-SEPTEMBER FOR FAILING TO PICK UP HIS
PARTY'S DEMAND TO MAKE THE COMMUNISTS CO-RESPONSIBLE FOR
THE GOVERNMENT PROGRAM, A DEBATE HAS DEVELOPED BETWEEN THE
PSI AND PCI OVER THE FUTURE ROLE OF THE SOCIALISTS. MEAN-
WHILE THERE HAVE BEEN REPORTS THAT THE SOCIALIST LEADERSHIP
IS WORKING ON THE OUTLINE OF A NEW STRATEGY MAKEING "THE
ALTERNATIVE OF THE LEFT" THE LONG-TERM PSI OBJECTIVE.
FAVORABLE COMMUNIST REACTION TO THIS PROPOSAL, WHICH ALSO
AUGURED THE REUNIFICATION OF THE TWO PARTIES, SPARKED SHARP
SOCIALIST AFFIRMATIONS OF AUTONOMY AND EVOKED PARTY SECRETARY
DEMARTINO'S FIRST PUBLIC QUESTIONING OF THE DEPTH OF THE
PCI'S DEMOCRATIC FAITH SINCE LONG BEFORE THE JUNE REGIONAL
ELECTIONS. PCI SPOKESMEN (INCLUDING BERLINGUER) ARE
ATTEMPTING TO SOOTH SOCIALIST FEELINGS BY AFFIRMING THE
PCI'S DEVOTION TO DEMOCRACY AND THE PSI'S "ESSENTIAL"
ROLE. END SUMMARY.

1. AT THIS PARTY'S DIRECTORATE MEETING LAST MONTH,
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SOCIALIST (PSI) SECRETARY DEMARTINO CHIDED THE COMMUNISTS

(PCI) FOR FAILING TO RESPOND TO PSI'S DEMAND TO MAKE THE COMMUNISTS (PCI) CO-RESPONSIBLE IN THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT. HE DEPLORED THE PCI'S "RIGID" PREFERENCE FOR THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE ON THE NATIONAL LEVEL IN CONTRAST TO THE LAUDABLE FLEXIBILITY IT HAD SHOWN ON THE LOCAL LEVEL (ROME 13679).

2. DEMARTINO'S CRITICISM OF THE PCI WAS IN FACT AN ANSWER TO MOUNTING CONCERN WITHIN HIS PARTY FOR THE PSI'S AUTONOMY IN THE FACE OF NEW INDICATIONS OF A COMMUNIST-CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT DIALOGUE (CONFRONTO) AND COOPERATION. (THE LATEST EVIDENCE OF THE LATTER IS DC-PCI LEGISLATIVE COOPERATION ON THE GOVERNMENT'S ANTI-RECESSION DECREES IN COMMITTEE AND ON THE FLOOR OF PARLIAMENT, A PROCESS PSDI LEADER PRETI CHARGES ALL THE OTHER PARTIES WERE CUT OUT OF, WHETHER BY MALFEASANCE OR NON-FEASANCE.)

3. IN THE FACE OF PSI CONCERN, WIDELY REPLAYED IN PRESS INTERVIEWS BY PARTY SPOKESMEN, AUTHORITATIVE PCI LEADERS (NAPOLITANO, CERVETTI, MACALUSO) REPLIED IN A MANNER DESIGNED TO REASSURE THE SOCIALISTS THAT THEIR AUTONOMY IS RESPECTED, AND THAT THEIR ROLE NOW AND IN THE FUTURE REMAINS ESSENTIAL. MACALUSO WAS HOWEVER THE MOST REVEALING IN AN INTERVIEW GIVEN TO THE WEEKLY ESPRESSO: TO PRESS FOR THE SOCIALIST PROPOSAL OF MAKING THE COMMUNISTS CO-RESPONSIBLE FOR THE GOVERNMENT PROGRAM NOW, HE SAID IN SUBSTANCE, WOULD HELP THE DC'S MODERATE AND CONSERVATIVE ELEMENTS, AND MAKE EARLY ELECTIONS HIGHLY PROBABLE AGAINST A REACTIONARY DC. THE ELECTORAL BATTLE MUST NOT BE FOUGHT OVER THE ISSUE OF PCI PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT, OR OVER GOVERNMENT FORMULAS, BUT OVER THE REAL PROBLEMS OF THE COUNTRY. ONCE THIS IS ASSURED, HE DID NOT EXCLUDE RECOURSE TO EARLY ELECTIONS (ALTHOUGH BERLINGUER HAS DONE SO PUBLICLY). FURTHERMORE, THE PCI IS NOT RIGID ON THE PROPOSAL--HISTORIC COMPROMISE OR NOTHING--AS CHARGED BY THE PSI. ITS BEHAVIOR ON THE LOCAL LEVEL SHOWS THAT WHEN CONDITIONS RIPEN FOR AN "INTERMEDIARY PHASE,"(OPEN PCI ROLE IN DEVELOPING LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM) AS IN LOMBARDY, LAZIO, MARCHE, AND CALABRIA, THE PCI DOES NOT HOLD BACK. IF ANALOGOUS CONDITIONS DE-

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VELOP ON THE NATIONAL LEVEL, THE PCI WOULD MOVE. BUT, HE INSISTED, CONDITIONS FOR AN ORGANIC PCI-PSI-DC GOVERNMENT HAVE NOT YET MATURED.

4. THE "DEBATE" THEN TOOK A NEW TURN IN THE SOCIALIST SECRETARIAT MEETING, OCTOBER 2, CALLED TO PREPARE FOR THE DIRECTORATE AND CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS SCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER 14-15 AND 16-17, RESPECTIVELY. THOUGH THE

PROCEEDINGS WERE BLANKETED BY THE SOCIALISTS' NEW-FOUND APPRECIATION FOR CONFIDENTIALITY, LEAKS AND PRESS INTER-VIEWS GIVEN BY SECRETARIAT MEMBERS REVEAL THAT THEY ARE WORKING ON THE OUTLINE OF A PLATFORM MAKING AN "ALTERNATIVE OF THE LEFT" THE SOCIALISTS' LONG-TERM STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE. THIS STRATEGY IS TO BE OPPOSED DIRECTLY TO THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE. MEANWHILE, THE PSI WILL DEVELOP AN "AUTONOMOUS" PROGRAM WITH WHICH TO CONFRONT BOTH THE DC AND THE PCI IN THE SHORT TERM. THE CENTER-LEFT WILL BE FORMALLY PRONOUNCED DEAD. LEAKS ABOUT THE FORMULATION OF THE UNDEFINED "ALTERNATIVE OF THE LEFT" AS THE PSI'S LONG-TERM STRATEGY SET OFF A PUBLIC DISCUSSION IN THE PRESS REGARDING THE ROLE LEFT FOR THE DC IN THE FUTURE SCHEME OF THINGS. VARIOUS SOCIALISTS EITHER ANTICIPATE THAT THE DC WILL NO LONGER BE A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH (CRAXI), OR EXPECT THAT ENLIGHTENED ELEMENTS WILL SPLIT OFF AND JOIN THE LEFT, OR ASSIGN TO THE DC A SUBORDINATE ROLE OF KEEPING RECALCITRANT CONSERVATIVES AND MODERATES FROM MAKING TROUBLE (E.G., LANDOLFI, DIVAGNO, MANCA). (ONLY PSI CHAMBER GROUP LEADER MARIOTTI NOW FORE-SEES A MAJOR ROLE FOR A REGENERATED DC.)

5. FOR THE PCI, SECRETARIAT MEMBER BUFALINI WAS APPARENTLY GIVEN THE RESPONSIBILITY OF FASHIONING A SATISFACTORY RESPONSE. OVERREACTING TO THE PSI'S LONG-TERM GOAL OF AN "ALTERNATIVE OF THE LEFT", HE CALLED FOR PUSHING THE PROCESS OF BRINGING THE TWO COMPONENTS (SOCIALIST AND COMMUNIST) OF THE ITALIAN WORKERS MOVEMENT CLOSER TOGETHER IDEOLOGICALLY, POLITICALLY, "AND IN REUNIFICATION." HIS ALLUSION TO REUNITING THE PARTIES GRATED ON SOCIALIST AUTONOMOUS SENSIBILITIES, AND EVOKED SECRETARY DEMARTINO'S SHARPEST POLEMICAL SORTIE AGAINST THE PCI SINCE LONG BEFORE THE JUNE REGIONAL ELECTIONS. THE SOCIALISTS, HE SAID, ARE READY

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TO DISCUSS THE "PASSAGE TO SOCIALISM" WITH THE COMMUNISTS, BUT THE TERMS OF THE DEBATE MUST INCLUDE AS A FUNDAMENTAL THEME THE EXPERIENCE OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL. " THE COMMUNIST STANCE WHICH IMPLIES A SORT OF UNCONCERN WITH RESPECT TO THE FUNDAMENTAL THEME OF LIBERTY, ADMITTING THE VALIDITY OF SOCIALISM BOTH IN DEMOCRATIC AND AUTHORITARIAN FORMS.. IS UNACCEPTABLE." DEMARTINO'S STATEMENT STIMULATED A NEW ROUND OF POLEMICS AS WELL AS A "CLARIFICATION" BY BUFALINI. PCI SECRETARY BERLINGUER ALSO TRIED TO PLACATE THE SOCIALISTS IN A SPEECH CLOSING THE UNITA FESTIVAL IN CATANIA. HE EMPHASIZED PREVIOUS ASSERTIONS THAT THE COMMUNISTS DO NOT INTEND TO MAKE A DEAL WITH THE DC AT THE EXPENSE OF THE SOCIALISTS, AND REPEATED BUFALINI'S AMENDED STATEMENT THAT THE PCI AUGURS PROGRESSIVE "POLITICAL AND CONCEPTUAL UNITY OF THE WORKERS'

MOVEMENT WHICH DOES NOT PRETEND TO LIMIT THE AUTONOMY OF THE TWO PARTIES". FOR THE REST, BERLINGUER'S SPEECH WAS A DEFENSE OF THE STRATEGY OF THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE IN THE FORM WHICH BRINGS THE SOCIALISTS INTO IT AS A PARTNER OF THE PCI VIS-A-VIS THE DC, I.E., AS THE JOINT REPRESENTATIVES OF THE "WORKERS' MOVEMENT." BERLINGUER NOT ONLY DEFENDED HIS STRATEGY AGAINST EXTERNAL CRITICS, BUT PUT "WE (COMMUNISTS) OURSELVES, AND THE ENTIRE WORKERS' MOVEMENT, ON GUARD AGAINST ANY TEMPTATION FOR ADVENTURE."

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6. IN A FRONT-PAGE EDITORIAL BY CLAUDIO PETRUCCIOLI ON OCTOBER 7, UNITA ATTEMPTS TO ANSWER DEMARTINO'S DOUBTS ABOUT THE PCI'S COMMITMENT TO DEMOCRACY. "DEMARTINO WELL KNOWS," PETRUCCIOLI SAYS, "THAT THE PCI HAS ALWAYS FOUGHT FOR LIBERTY IN EVERY OCCASION." FURTHER, INSOFAR AS DEMARTINO REFERS TO THE EXPERIENCES OF THE USSR AND THE COUNTRIES OF EASTERN EUROPE, THE PCI "HAS ALWAYS SHOWN, NOT IN WORDS BUT IN DEEDS, THE MAXIMUM READINESS TO EXAMINE (THE ISSUES), BUT NATURALLY FOR AN OBJECTIVE EXAMINATION, NOT ONE SPOILED BY PROPAGANDISTIC WORRIES, AND THUS ONE THAT TAKES FULL ACCOUNT OF THE COMPLEXITIES OF THOSE EXPERIENCES."

7. COMMENT: THE PSI'S IMPENDING "AUTONOMOUS" FORMALIZATION OF A STRATEGY OF THE LEFT, AND THE NATURE OF ITS PRESENT DEBATE

WITH THE PCI, ARE INDICATIVE OF HOW FAR LEFT THE PSI HAS MOVED DURING THE PAST YEAR, ESPECIALLY SINCE THE JUNE REGIONAL RELECTIONS. THOUGH DEBATE AT THE PARTY'S OCTOBER CONCLAVES IS LIKELY TO BE LIVELY, TWO POINTS ARE SHORED ALMOST UNANIMOUSLY BY LEADERS AND FOLLOWERS: THAT THE CENTER-LEFT HAS SERVED ITS TIME, AND THAT ANY NEW SOCIALIST STRATEGY MUST BE WHOLLY "SOCIALIST," THAT IS, EXPLICITLY AIMED AT CREATING A NEW SOCIALIST AND DEMOCRATIC ORDER. ANY OTHER INTERMEDIATE PHASE IS NOW CONFIDENTIAL

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VIEWED AS A TACTICAL MEANS TO THE END.

8. AS THE SOCIALISTS MOVE CLOSER TO THE COMMUNISTS IN THEIR STATED POLICY GOALS, THE REAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE PARTIES IN STYLE AND, ABOVE ALL, THEIR CONCEPTION OF DEMOCRACY, ARE BOUND TO STIMULATE POLEMICS. GIVEN THE CIRCIMSTANCES, THERE IS NO MORE CREDIBLE AGENT THAN THE PSI IN ITALY TODAY FOR PUTTING PCI FEET TO THE FIRE REGARDING THEIR RELATIONS WITH AND ADMIRATION FOR THE SOVIET BRAND OF COMMUNISM. THE VAGUENESS OF THE PCI'S LATEST STATEMENT ON THIS SUBJECT(QUOTED IN PARA. 6 ABOVE) SUGGESTS THAT THERE IS AN OPENING HERE FOR FURTHER PSI INITIATIVES, IF ONLY THEY WILL TAKE ADVANTAGE OF IT.VOLPE

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